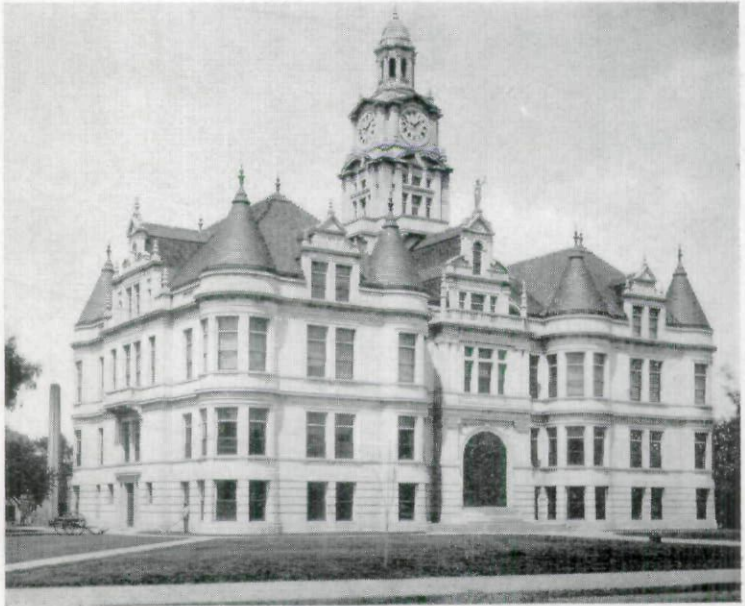


Old Dallas County Courthouse, Erected in 1858



Present Dallas County Courthouse, Erected in 1902

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THIRD SERIES

When Railroads Were Sought

By ORA WILLIAMS

So it has come about, in Iowa as elsewhere, that the romance of the rails is being blurred by the dust clouds of speed monsters of the asphalt trails. The world moves.

The change-over is not unduly fast. Its reality has long been recognized in the haunts of free enterprise dollars. Here we are in the first year of the last half of the twentieth century, and we are told that it is no longer profitable to convey mails and passengers over a railroad line 175 miles long that cuts right through the heart of the garden of abundance connecting the capital of Iowa with the state's chief lake region.

When the writer heard the shrill whistle of the silver-adorned iron horse, as it brought westward the first passenger train operating west of the Iowa capital city, and heard the new day ushered in with band music and barbecue oratory at the Raccoon forks (the town then known as Tracy and later changed to Van Meter), no one of the little band of frontiersmen present could possibly have foreseen the changes of a lifetime. I can personally testify that ours is not a static nor receding society.

I heard the sharp crack of the stage driver's whip as he raced along the dusty state road that spanned Iowa. The roadside taverns flourished. The foot peddlers paused at the cabin near the prairie mill to sell pins and ribbons. The oxen yokes were almost too heavy, but somehow they were hung around the necks of

"Buck and "Brindle." The seats and desks at the little "McGuffey academy" were crudely fashioned of walnut wood that was easy to whittle. But that deep-sounding steam whistle, which rolled its alarms along the wooded valleys, was something else.

Did these sturdy country folks appreciate what it meant to have that barbecue and rail-opening celebration at the forks of the Raccoon rivers? Oh yes, most certainly; but they could not have foreseen much that was to follow. They could not have believed that within the span of one lifetime this new steel age would give way to rubber and gas and asphalt; that there would be not one revolution, but a series of evolutionary events. This unparalleled movement is a stirring romance, spiced with comedy and tinged a little with tragedy.

AMERICA'S AMAZING GENIUS

When Bunker Hill monument was dedicated, the great orator, Daniel Webster, told of the immense progress in the arts of civilization witnessed in the fifty years following the battle of the patriots. He spoke of the age of inventive genius that culminated in the telegraph and the canal boat. Never before had there been, in such short time, so much done for the making of the good life. Little did he dream of the wonders soon to come out of shops and laboratories. The Iowa we know was not on the map. It would be long before the iron rails would be laid across the prairies still marked by the footpaths of the deer and buffalo.

The story of the co-operation of steel rails and stout hearts in the making of Iowa, typical of almost every state of the Union, ought to be written before memory fades. It is not alone a story of cold facts and figures and courageous adventure, but a narrative embellished with the hopes and fears and highest aspirations of a pioneering people in dead earnest in the taming of the forests and the harnessing of the winds and waters of the boundless prairies.

A little more than a century and a quarter ago the

political nation-makers drew a red mark across the map through what is now Iowa and far to the northwest and it is said they induced two presidents to recommend that all this almost worthless region, as they said it was, be given to the Indians for their perpetual home. But westward progress could not be stopped at the wish of the plantation lords and their slave drivers. Keen-eyed men with transits and chains were to cross the big river and make paths, and they came at the behest of the men who had come in covered wagons with their plows and axes. When the pigs grew fat on the acorns, the pioneers realized they must have access to markets. It was their urging that bridged the Mississippi, even if the rivermen did try to knock out a pier at the gateway. It was the promises of men who had lived in log cabins that induced the surveyors to traverse the wooded valleys. Subsidies were given in land and tax money to encourage the road builders. They defied the hostility of the stage owners. They saw their oak forests cut that the iron rails might rest easier. For long they submitted to tax evasions and discriminations. They paid six cents a mile to ride on smoky trains. They permitted narrow gauge roads in the crooked gulches. It was Iowa people, their sweat, their toil, their money, their determination, that built the railroads in Iowa. The winning of the West was an adventure of muscle and courage.

NOW ABANDONING PASSENGER SERVICE

And now, the Iowa commerce commission has been asked, in this year 1951, to give permission to the Chicago, Milwaukee, St. Paul and Pacific company to abandon once and for all, passenger service on its line from Des Moines to Spirit Lake.

The mail has been carried over at least a part of this route for almost 75 years. Abandonment will mean perhaps the most passenger mileage at any one time consigned to the graveyard of an expanding economy. The strip is outlet for a fertile land. The red barns seen from the car windows are very large. Between

the rail owners and the farm owners there has been fine co-operation in community building. High hopes and timid fears were mingled when the present owners took over and gave great promises. But the patrons have been well served and the rail owners still better.

There are a half-dozen good county-seat cities and twice as many fine towns in which there will be mourning when the last passenger train completes its trip. If I should be nearby, I would be thinking, and thinking — perhaps, among other things, of my own honeymoon trip from Adel when I brought my bride to the big city, and of the later journey back when she was borne to her last resting place on the same scheduled train with the same conductor, an old school-mate.

Quite likely, memory would carry me back further, to the time when I was one of the party of rollicking merrymakers who rode the first passenger trains over any part of the line. That train would today be little more than a museum piece. But it was big enough for the six miles of track then laid. The locomotive was much like a mine engine, with the water tank slung saddle fashion over the boiler. There were one or two freight boxcars in which wood benches had been set up for the guests. The two or three flatcars had boards across for seats for the youngsters. All were, of course, of narrow gauge.

The seven miles of road then completed ran from Adel to Waukee. The rails stopped at the edge of the latter town and did not cross the Fort Dodge line. There was no turntable, so the locomotive that pulled the train from the county seat, pushed the cars back, most of the way down hill, to a temporary platform across the river from the town. There had not been enough money with which to build a bridge over the Raccoon river. That would come later. But the happy farmer folk were ready for the grand opening excursion of the new railroad.

There was great cause for rejoicing in the county-seat that had held court for 20 years without being disturbed by the whistle of a locomotive. The road was planned and built to save the courthouse — and it did just that.

It was a warm moonlit night when that train, with its free ride for all who would come, made the turn near where the county had been organized and slid carefully down to the river bottoms. I was one of the boys who took choice positions sitting on the edge of the rear car — the head of the train as it backed up — and with legs dangling over the boards, watched the turns of the road. Once a rabbit came out of the brush and ran down the track a little way. Then it sat down to see if the train was really coming. As we approached, it ran some distance and repeated. The animal had never seen such a contraption.

Thus was inaugurated in 1878 passenger service on the Des Moines, Adel and Western. Tom Ashton, the liveryman, was general manager, conductor and ticket agent; Sam Ward, the town blacksmith, was engineer; Wes. Howe, a young man of the town, shoveled in the coal.

LOCATING DALLAS COUNTY SEAT

In Dallas county, as in many others, the courthouse problem became tied up with the transportation plans. The story of this double problem in Iowa would be an excellent college thesis and sufficient for an interesting book. The link became apparent early in Dallas, the first county authorized to be organized after statehood was achieved. The organizing commissioners were directed by law to meet at the town of Hickory. But there was no Hickory town. They met at the little schoolhouse where later one teacher was to be Joe Reed, who rose to be chief justice of the state supreme court. They designated the county seat to be on land offered at the big bend of the Raccoon, and named the place Penoch. There had been a Penoch farther up the Raccoon river, so called by the Indians

as the place "farthest away," where they came for sugar making. Ben Greene gave land for the courthouse, but court was first held in a cubbyhole long later used as a tailor shop. Greene named the town "Adel" in honor of a pretty girl who lived there. Eleven years later a brick courthouse was built. The village of Adel was setting pretty. The only other town in the new county was Wiscotta, just beginning to move over to Redfield, because the latter was located on the stage road across the state.

Rumors of the coming of the railroads stirred the cabins and mills. Also there were warnings. Did not a projected "Air Line" from Philadelphia to some place out west, get a lot of tax money along its projected route and then go bankrupt? But the whistles were actually heard on the Iowa and Cedar rivers, and promoters were looking things over for a good route to the Missouri river.

Abraham Lincoln, a young lawyer of Springfield, stood on a hill and pointed out to Grenville M. Dodge, young engineer, the precise spot on the Missouri river flats where a proposed railroad should start from Council Bluffs to cross the "Great American desert" and go over the high Sierras to the Pacific coast. Years later it was Dodge who located the Union Pacific terminal right there. But in the meantime, Dodge had another job put in his hands. He was hired to run a preliminary survey from Iowa City through Des Moines to the place where the Pacific road was to start. About all he did was to demonstrate that a line could easily be run across Iowa.¹

The Dodge survey was accepted by later engineers, as far as Des Moines, but through Dallas and Guthrie counties the route was diverted by Engineer Brayton for the Rock Island. Engineer Dodge employed Peter A. Dey, later to be an Iowa railroad commissioner, to sight the directions for the survey party. West of Des

¹The original notes of Gen. Grenville M. Dodge on this survey are in the valuable collection of material in the Dodge room of the State historical building.

Moines they followed up a small valley and camped at the then post office of Boone, not far from where the tiny cemetery stands in the middle of a cross-road, thence to the North Raccoon river between Adel and the Raccoon forks. The Sunday they crossed the river, a party went up the valley and brought back some wild ducks. A farm boy, Wiley Lane, was hired to help carry chains, because he was good with a rifle. Not far from Wiscotta they had venison for dinner. Out between Dale City and Dalmanutha they met a party of Indians from Nebraska returning from a foraging raid into Missouri. News of this surveying caused great excitement in Adel. When the road was built some years later, Dodge and Dey were locating the Union Pacific road across Nebraska. The Dodge crossing of the North Raccoon was not far from where I was born.

DODGE SURVEY SUPERIOR

Incidentally, the route surveyed by General Dodge was far better than the one actually used years later, but there would have to be a slight bend to accommodate the county-seat town. The North Raccoon crossing was at a well-known ford, with which in later years, I became quite familiar. It was not far from the farm of my father, Ephraim, who was one of the early master farmers in Iowa, made use of by Duane Wilson, uncle of the president Wilson, for experimental work with seeds and plants.²

At the stage road crossing my father operated a saw-mill and flour mill and had employed the grandfather of Herbert Hoover to be head mill-man for a year. When the new railroads had established their stations, I saw him nail to an oak tree two signboards: one with the legend "Des Moines 20 mi., DeSoto, 5 mi.," and on the other cross board "Adel, 4½ mi., Van Meter 3½ mi." This latter sign was a landmark for years.

There would be an extension of the line through Clinton to Cedar Rapids, but this did not greatly in-

²Gen. Duane Wilson was secretary of the Iowa state board of agriculture, and helpful in establishing the college at Ames.

terest Dallas county people. When John I. Blair, who with his New Jersey friends built the Northwestern, attended the Republican national convention at Chicago and supported Dayton but yielded to the Lincoln nomination, he personally tramped to the Missouri river and came back through Dallas county, just to see how things looked.³

Then, there was a project for extension of the Des Moines Valley line to come up the river and go on to Fort Dodge, which would traverse much of Dallas county.

Over in Madison county they were prepared to make a hard pull for the extension of the Mississippi and Missouri, now the Rock Island road. That, also, was much desired by the Dallas county folks, and they had the advantage, for the preliminary survey showed a good route through the county.

CIVIL WAR RUDELY INTERRUPTS

The Civil war caused a lull in the railroad agitation. It did make necessary a telegraph line across Iowa. At the outset of the war the only telegraph connection Washington had with the far west was over wires along the line of the Hannibal and St. Joseph railroad, thence up the Missouri valley to Council Bluffs and across the plains. If the Confederacy got control of the line across northern Missouri, the far west would be cut off. The deepest penetration of the telegraph into Iowa direct from the east was to Cedar Rapids, on Blair's railroad. A line was hastily strung on short poles from Council Bluffs along the well-traveled stage road to Des Moines and on to Cedar Rapids, thereby completing the first continental line in wholly free territory.

Thus it was in the opening month of 1862, that the capital city of Iowa began to receive telegraph messages by wire and the Des Moines newspapers ceased to depend upon stage packages hastily made up at Council Bluffs for their world news.

³John I. Blair's diary of his trip of investigation through Iowa in 1860 is among the archives in the State historical building.

Railroad building could wait while the foundations of the American union were being made more secure. Lincoln became president. Dodge went south with Grant to do army engineering work at Vicksburg and elsewhere. There was confusion in the ambitious towns of Adel and Redfield. There were post offices and villages at Xenia, New Alton, and Cincinnati, and a place on the map was marked Penoch.

There was a great awakening when the thin lines of Blue came trudging along the stage roads and back home. There was new life stirring in Adel. The new courthouse⁴ was a matter of pride, but the population of the county was increasing and something must be done to get a railroad. No county seat could hope to keep its courthouse without transportation by rail. A good weekly newspaper would be useful. Professor Holt, who had been county school superintendent in Benton county, came with an outfit and started the *Dallas Weekly Gazette*, especially to boost for a railroad to Adel. Sam Hempstead came with commission as postmaster in his pocket to help. He soon became the boss of the courthouse clique, but was caught with money in his possession taken from stolen letters.

They had enthusiastic railroad booster meetings in which men from Redfield participated. Of course the Rock Island would go through the only two good towns, so the argument ran; of the Valley road they were not so sure, nor did they care very much. Money was subscribed for proper influence. The *Gazette* presented strong arguments as against Winterset, for one thing, on the ground that there was much more of the public domain available for bonus along the Dallas-Guthrie route than on the Madison-Adair route. But there was strong bidding as between Winterset and Adel. Long after, it was said that Adel failed to get the Rock Island largely because of too much confidence, that anyway it would be best for the road to follow the old stage line. Also there was belief in

⁴The square brick courthouse bore the inscription on the gable: "Built by C. Rodenbaugh 1858."

Adel that somebody ought to have been paid something in order to get the railroad. Anyway, Adel didn't get either of the roads.

New towns sprung up around the stations. Soon there would be a dozen good towns. New Alton post office was moved to the Harvey Willis farm, and the city of Perry was laid out. Jacob Van Meter helped start a town at his mill at the Raccoon forks. The Hemphills were soon buying livestock at De Soto. Tom Hatton of Des Moines boosted for Waukee and Dallas Center. In fact, the last-named place was openly out to get the county seat. It was no nearer to the county center than Adel, but it had a suggestive name and a railroad.

ADEL'S NEED OF RAILROAD

Adel simply had to get a railroad or tear down the big square courthouse. A railroad was a must.

The first train into the county came on the Rock Island road. It arrived at Coon forks one summer day. The Rock Island managers had rigged up a "silver-mounted" train,⁵ and brought it from Chicago with a load of railroad bigwigs for a barbecue celebration. They brought a band and some silk-hat speakers. I was on the straw in the wagon box with others of the family when my father guided the ox team the three and a half miles to the scene of the great railroad barbecue. Much excitement. Many cheers. Town was called Tracy, but later changed to Van Meter, long before Bob Feller's grandfather made me a suit of clothes in his tailor shop.

Now, what has all this to do with the troubles of the Spirit Lake passenger and mail train? Well, a good deal, in fact everything. There was the perfectly-good, new courthouse, not so good as the one at Newton or the one at Winterset, but better than the courthouse at Boonesboro or Panora. But it was not nailed down. Had not Dallas Center been so named for the purpose of getting the county seat as more central than Adel,

⁵This silver-mounted engine and train were exhibited at the Chicago Centennial exposition in 1893, but later was lost in a fire.

which it wasn't? In line with the promises of the realty men, a petition was circulated to have the courthouse moved to the new town. Sam Sloane had gone from Adel to publish a weekly paper and boost for Dallas Center. There was coolness to the proposal in towns in the south part of the county, and the voters did not authorize the change.

But, that was not the end. Removal would be tried again, and in fact, several times; and once a start was made to have the fast-growing town of Perry made the county seat. Dallas Center had a "courthouse square" right across from where Bill Brenton lived, and in Perry there was a triangle on which in later years was to be the city library. The county-seat question plagued and confused the whole local political outlook for many years.

Wind and weather conspired to make it embarrassing to have no rail connection to a county seat. Once when the district judge and some members of the bar needed to make hasty transfer from Adel to Winterset they took passage in one of Liveryman Tom Ashton's "hacks." He had the mail-carrying contract from Adel to Waukee and DeSoto. One of the Diddy brothers, who were the drivers, was drafted to take the legal talent across a very rough country, on roads up and down steep hills, and deep with mud. At the South Raccoon crossing, near where Grotius Van Meter had a flour mill, the rig slipped off the water-covered grade and "the court" lost his silk hat in the rushing flood. That was exasperating.

Then there was a famous snowstorm when no mail got to Adel for two weeks. Nearby postmasters were called into Des Moines to help sort the accumulated mail. Postmaster Bill Brockway went from Adel and brought the Adel mail back as far as the town of Van Meter, and there he hired two bobsleds each with a four-horse team, to flounder through deep snowbanks along the crooked river road to the county seat. In Dallas Center they laughed.

Agitation for naming a new county seat could not be silenced as long as country roads had mud a foot deep. In fact, not until the opening of the era of hard roads did Dallas county decide a new courthouse was needed. Right on the spot where in 1858 Charlie Rodenbaugh had built the old brick courthouse, they completed in 1902 an attractive turreted stone structure that is unique for its novel style. That was made possible by the building of the six miles of narrow gauge that is today a part of the Milwaukee's line to Spirit Lake.

FIRST FAMILIES HAD COURAGE

Adel wasn't whipped yet, nor would it be, for it could muster a regiment of able and enterprising men of the precise pattern to be found in every community of the state. The men of small courage stayed in the states farther east. Even as I take part of my retirement time for a rest beside a cool lake of the great north woods, far from any reference library, I can recall many names of worthy Adel families. Let's see—Greene, Garoutte, Noel, North, Russell, Callvert, Ashton, Blanchard, Boak, Willard, Marsh, Orton, Moffett, Ward, White, Chance, Jones, Martin, Byers, Brockway, Forrester, Frush, Risser, Diddy, Howe, Snyder, Smart, Longmire, Lambert, Winans, Tawney, McMullen, Clarke, Bailey, McKay, Smith, Jolley, McLaughlin, Van Fossen, Foster, Patty, Brenton, Michener, Irvin, Perkins, Burns, Morse, Hoeye, Holt, Cotton, Ely, Kinnick, Ellis, Nichols, Welsh, Coons, Ferguson, Ford, Caldwell, Ludington, Campbell, Goughnour, Hill, Nye, Taylor, Witham, Gilkeson, Rodenbaugh, Baugh, Witman, Bales, Otterman, Houghton, Chapman, Sweeley, Geneser, Miller, Knowles, Joy, Faulkner, Worster, Lee, Fitzgerald, Morain, Magart, Woodin, Graham, Loomis, Loper, Krysher, Davidson.

The list could be extended. They were of different national origins, different creeds, every vocation; just the same as the pioneers of every county. They were intense in their likes and loyalties. Why, an Adel blacksmith, Sherman, was at the National convention in 1856, which nominated Fremont for president! So

they built their own little railroad to the county seat.

The boys in Blue were back home. Secession had been given its quietus. Prairie sod was being broken for fields. The old state road that wound up a valley and over a ridge past numerous muskrat ponds on its way to Council Bluffs, was still dusty, but the stages of the Western Stage Company made stops at taverns in Adel, Redfield, Panora, Dalmanutha and other places. The artillery battery from Adel was disbanded. Early in the seventies a meeting was held and a company was organized to build a railroad.⁶ Later, the organizers put up the money.⁷ Waukee was the best place to tap the roads that had ignored Adel. Most of the right of way was donated by landowners. Grading was commenced. Some of the labor was a gift. But the job was too big for the small town. With the treasury empty and no rails laid, the whole enterprise was placed in the hands of Tom North, hard-headed lawyer, to be held until more money could be found.

When the first train completed its run there was presented to Benjamin Greene, the president, a gold-headed cane. At a later time when the train got across the Raccoon river on a wooden bridge, a similar cane went to Dr. Timothy J. Caldwell, then president. Both, at different times, were members of the Iowa legislature.

The bridge was right at the river ford where we saw one of the elephants with the Barnum and Van

⁶At Adel, Aug. 5, 1871, plans were laid at a public meeting for building a railroad from Des Moines westward by way of Waukee, Adel, Redfield and Panora, and the Des Moines Western Railway Company was organized—S. S. Harmon, Redfield, president; Ezra Willard, Adel, vice president; J. E. Williams, Adel, secretary; T. Roberts, Panora, treasurer. The road from Waukee to Panora was located the same year and considerable grading was done from Adel to Waukee. Work was abandoned in 1875 and Thomas R. North, attorney, of Adel, became owner of the right of way.

⁷The Des Moines, Adel and Western Railroad company was organized at Adel in April 1875 and took over. Officers: T. R. Foster, president; J. B. Brenton, vice president; J. M. Landis, secretary; J. W. Russell, treasurer, all of Adel. In 1878 first run was made, Adel to Waukee. In 1879 the Raccoon river had been crossed and the road extended to Panora. T. J. Caldwell had become president; J. S. Runnels, secretary; F. M. Hubbell, treasurer.

Amberg show pause to throw water over his drivers in resentment at having to wade instead of cross on the bridge.

ADEL LINE EXTENDED TO FONDA

There was a fine spirit of co-operation in this small-town county seat, and when there was less need for keeping an eye on the courthouse, attention was turned seriously to the making of their railroad profitable. New locomotives and cars gave good service with connections to the outside world. But a splendid farming region lay to the west and north. Surveys were made for an extension to Sac City. To do so would take more money than they had. LeRoy Lambert, the town's private banker, was not flush. A committee, with assembled facts and figures, got an audience with insurance company executives in New York and a promise of a loan. The next day the papers would be signed and the credit be placed at banks. Happy and smiling the Adel committee called as arranged.

"It's all off," abruptly spoke an insurance man as he waved his uplifted arm. 'Didn't you read about the big fire in Boston that took half that city? Well, we will need all our money to settle the losses. Nothing doing for you.'⁸

So, they came back home and made another try. This time they interested Frederick M. Hubbell, of Des Moines, and he found the money with which to extend the Adel narrow gauge, not to Sac City, but to Fonda for a connection there with the Illinois Central.⁹ In due time the gauge would be broadened to

⁸Boston fire, November 9, 1872, leveled 67 acres, destroyed almost 800 buildings; 75 million damage. This was only a year after the Chicago fire of October 8, 1871, with damage of 196 million, which swept 2,124 acres, burned 17,450 buildings, killed 250 persons and made 98,500 homeless.

⁹The Des Moines Northwestern Railway company succeeded to ownership Sept. 27, 1880 and under a lease to the Wabash railroad extension was made as far as Lohrville the next year. In 1882 this company purchased that part of the road which had been built from Waukee to Clive and a half interest in the road to Twenty-eighth street in Des Moines. The road was extended to Fonda. When the Wabash company became embarrassed in 1884, foreclosure proceedings placed the whole road in the possession of Polk and Hubbell, of Des Moines.

standard width; but at one time a third rail was laid on the Fort Dodge line into Des Moines, and there was a brief period of operation by the Wabash railroad, which already had a terminus in Des Moines. The old Christian church in the capital city was taken over for a station and office. Later the present Union station was built on the same site.

Mr. Hubbell was a financier whose every step was sure. The line to Boone was added,¹⁰ and the Des Moines river near Madrid was on a 100-foot-high bridge near which the coal town of High Bridge was built. The Union station and the terminal lines to the factory district were built. The little Adel-Waukee narrow gauge road had become the Des Moines and Northwestern with tracks into Des Moines. Somewhere along the line Billy Finnicum commenced to "crank the brakes" and then took up tickets for almost a lifetime. He did not lay aside his uniform until he had joined the Milwaukee in boosting for the Hiawatha luxury train to the western coast. Frank Meek, George Ogilvie, Luke M. Martin and A. B. Cummins were among the strong men connected with the roads.

When the Milwaukee railroad bought the lines, there came the extension to Spencer and past the Okoboji lakes to Spirit Lake. Before the time of the automobiles, the Spirit Lake specials did a thriving business with lake resorters as best patrons. A half-dozen good country trading posts appeared. The milk trains gathered the cream. Farm women trudged to the stations with baskets of eggs. Nearly everybody along the route that almost spanned the state knew most of the

¹⁰Incorporation of the Des Moines and Northwestern Railway company was effected Oct. 3, 1887: F. M. Hubbell, president; G. M. Dodge, vice president, J. S. Polk, secretary and treasurer. The track Des Moines to Clive was made a 3-rail way and by September 1891 the entire track to Fonda had been changed from narrow to standard gauge. In December, 1894 the Des Moines Northern and Western Railroad company became owner. Mixed with these companies was the St. Louis, Des Moines and Northern and the Des Moines and Northern, with line to Madrid and Boone. Some years later the entire property was sold to the Milwaukee company and extension made from Fonda to Spirit Lake. The original plan to build to the Missouri river was abandoned; also the later plan to go to Sac City and Storm Lake.

trainmen. The once little courthouse savor of four-foot gauge had become the standard gauge thoroughfare to save the markets for a broad belt of Iowa's best farm land.

The romance of the rails has no more interesting chapter in this first free state carved out of the Louisiana purchase. And the courthouse is a fine one.

St. Paul, Minnesota.—August, 1951

A Cargo of Buffalo Robes

The Steamer Nellie Rogers arrived in Sioux City recently from the upper Missouri with 17,000 buffalo robes for the American Fur Company. She experienced much difficulty in getting down from low water and hostile Indians.—*Daily Iowa Statesman*, Des Moines, August 21, 1863.

Down to the Roots

It's always seemed to me that legends and yarns and folktales are as much a part of the real history of a country as proclamations and provisos and constitutional amendments. The legends and the yarns get down to the roots of the people.—Stephen Vincent Benet.

Garfield Knew His Bible

It has been customary for each president of the United States to kiss the open page of the Bible when being sworn in at his inauguration. President James A. Garfield kissed the first six verses of the Twenty-first chapter of the book of Proverbs.

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